

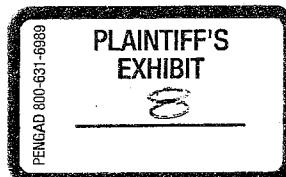
Governor's Commission on Criminal Justice Innovation

Final Report

Mitt Romney,
Governor

Kerry Healey,
Lieutenant Governor

Edward A. Flynn,
Secretary of Public Safety



C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The members of the Forensic Technology Subcommittee recommended a centrally managed and organized model. Under that model, Massachusetts would be well served by creating a Forensic Sciences Advisory Board, appointed by the Governor, to oversee management of forensic services in the Commonwealth and to advocate for additional resources to address existing challenges. Working in conjunction with that Board, the effective, unified delivery of forensic services should occur either through a single entity under the Executive Office of Public Safety, or though a coordinated effort of several entities. Centralized management of forensic services would provide for better fiscal control, improved long-term planning, setting and enforcement of standards, and implementation of technology services to improve the delivery of forensic services, and accountability to the end users.

In a centralized model, the director or manager of forensic services could serve, in part, to evaluate, coordinate and facilitate the other aspects of forensic service in the Commonwealth, such as human resource issues (e.g., job retention, salaries), management approaches, organizational strategies, client outreach, and communication between laboratories. The director or manager could also schedule and convene regular meetings with the Advisory Board, conduct studies, make recommendations, and facilitate change. Similarly, the director or manager would be responsible for overseeing the budget for the forensic services, and consideration should be given to whether the funding for forensics should be as a "line item" or whether it should be embedded within parent agency budgets. An effort to resolve ongoing minor disagreements over the implementation of centralized forensic services is underway.

Additional, specific recommendations included:

1. Increased funding at all levels for forensic pathology services provided by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.
2. The construction of an expanded building at a central location to house the MSPCL and the various forensic services provided by that laboratory.
3. Add four criminalists to the staff of the MSPCL to assist in the more than 1,630 cases that are analyzed annually. This will reduce the turn-around-time for case examination and report issuance, and would also allow more evidence in each case to be examined.
4. Add 21 additional DNA analysts to eradicate the annual backlog of DNA cases and meet the demand for DNA analysis. Additional staff would aid in reducing the turn-around-time, would allow the laboratory to validate and institute improved technologies not currently available at the MSPCL, and would allow the analysis of more samples.
5. Consolidation of all forensic toxicology and drug services within the Massachusetts State Police Crime Laboratory.